

The Brotherhood of the Kingdom

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The recent announcement of the formation of the Brotherhood of the Kingdom has awakened considerable interest, if we may judge by the number of questions asked concerning it. Perhaps a brief statement concerning its origin and purpose will be welcome.

The Brotherhood has taken shape very gradually, naturally, and, as we believe, under the guidance of God. It began in the friendship of a number of us who had been drawn together by kinship of spirit and similarity of convictions. As we exchanged our thoughts about the Kingdom of our Master, our views grew more definite and more united. We saw the church of Christ divided by selfishness; every denomination intent on its own progress, often at the expense of the progress of the Kingdom; churches and pastors absorbed in their own affairs and jealous of one another; external forms of worship and church polity magnified and the spirit neglected; the people estranged from the church and the church indifferent to the movements of the people; aberrations from creeds severely censured, and aberrations from the Christian spirit of self-sacrifice tolerated.

As we contemplated these blemishes of the body of Christ, and sorrowed over them in common with all earnest lovers of the church of Jesus, it grew clear to us that many of these evils have their root in the wrongful abandonment or the perversion of the great aim of Christ: the Kingdom of God. As the idea of the Kingdom is the key to the teachings and work of Christ, so its abandonment or misconstruction is the key to the false or one-sided conception of Christianity and our halting realization of it. Because the Kingdom of God has been dropped as the primary and comprehensive aim of Christianity, and personal salvation has been substituted for it, therefore men seek to save their own souls and are selfishly indifferent to the evangelization of the world. Because the individualistic conception of personal salvation has pushed out of sight the collective idea of a Kingdom of God on earth, Christian men seek for the salvation of individuals and are comparatively indifferent to the spread of the Spirit of Christ in the political, industrial, social, scientific and artistic life of humanity, and have left these as the undisturbed possession of the spirit of the world. Because the Kingdom of God has been understood as a state to be inherited in a future life rather than as something to be realized here and now, therefore Christians have been contented with a low plane of life here and

have postponed holiness to the future. Because the Kingdom of God has been confounded with the church, therefore the church has been regarded as an end instead of a means, and men have thought they were building up the Kingdom when they were only cementing a strong church organization.

As these thoughts took shape through observation and the study of Scripture and church history, and grew hot through prayer, and as we felt in our personal efforts the magnitude of the task of removing these evils, we determined to strike hands in the name of Christ, and by union to multiply our opportunities, increase our wisdom, and keep steadfast our courage. So we formed ourselves into a "Brotherhood of the Kingdom," in order "to re-establish this idea in the thought of the church and to assist in its practical realization in the world."

We desire to see the Kingdom of God once more the great object of Christian preaching; the inspiration of Christian hymnology; the foundation of systematic theology; the enduring motive of evangelistic and missionary work; the religious inspiration of social work and the social outcome of religious inspiration; the object to which a Christian man surrenders his life, and in that surrender saves it to eternal life; the common object in which all religious bodies find their unity; the great synthesis in which the regeneration of the spirit, the enlightenment of the intellect, the development of the body, the reform of political life, the sanctification of industrial life, and all that concerns the redemption of humanity shall be embraced.

To this task, God helping us, we desire to dedicate our lives. We invite others, ministers and laymen, to join us in it. We are not a proselyting body. We care little for numbers. We care much for the spirit. If any one has cherished the same prayerful longings and feels that he is in substantial agreement with our aims, and if, moreover, he is willing to render service that may not bring honor or profit, we heartily invite him to put himself in communication with our Secretary, Rev. S. Z. Batten (312 W. 54th St., N. Y.), or with any of our members. Pastors who desire to have their people come in contact with the ideas for which we stand, will find us ready to serve them in the pulpit or on the platform, so far as other duties permit. As far as our efforts will reach in the churches, in the religious press, in the social movements, and in our personal relations, we hope to carry the thoughts and the spirit of the King whose bondservants we are, and to hasten with all our strength the time when the kingdom of the earth shall be the kingdom of the Christ.